

Oxalis exilis

COMMON NAME

creeping oxalis, yellow oxalis

SYNONYMS

Oxalis corniculata var. *microphylla* Hook.f.; ?*Oxalis corniculata* var. *ciliifera* (Cunn.) Hook.f.

FAMILY

Oxalidaceae

AUTHORITY

Oxalis exilis A.Cunn.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

OXAEXI

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. Australia, New Zealand and probably the western Pacific. Naturalised in parts of Europe and the United Kingdom. In New Zealand present on the Three Kings, North, South, Stewart and Chatham Islands.

HABITAT

Coastal to subalpine (up to 1100 m a.s.l.). However, mostly in lowland areas. Common in urban areas and in disturbed or successional indigenous habitats. Rarely in dense forest (though often colonising tracksides) and tussock grassland.

FEATURES

Perennial herb without bulbils; taproot absent or weakly developed. Stems creeping or ascending up to 380 mm long, very sparsely antrorse-hairy. Leaves all cauline, tufted, 3-foliolate; leaflets sessile, 2.5-6.0 x 3.0-6.0 mm, mostly bright green, cuneate-obcordate, bilobed, glabrous above, pubescent below, margins ciliate, sinus cut to 1/3 leaflet length, lobes obovate, divergent, apices obtuse, 2-3 mm apart; petioles 10-90 mm long, with antrorse hairs; stipules to 2 mm long, conspicuous, with apex lobed or truncate, or inconspicuous with apex tapering abruptly to petiole, more or less ciliate. Inflorescences axillary, 1-2-flowered; peduncles at least as long as leaves, antrorse-hairy; pedicels erect, sometimes deflexed in fruit. Sepals oblong, 1.5-3.0 mm long, ciliate or glabrous; petals yellow, 4.5-9.0 mm long. Capsule 5.0-10.0 mm long, conical to cylindrical, usually moderately retrorse-hairy, often with scattered septate hairs; seeds 1.0-1.4 mm long, strongly transversely ribbed.



Oxalis exilis. Photographer: John Barkla



Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe

SIMILAR TAXA

Rather variable but recognised by the widely creeping habit and lack of bulbils and obvious taproot; inconspicuous to conspicuous, lobed, truncate or tapering abruptly stipules up to 2 mm long; sparsely antrorse hairy stems; short and broad fruits (5.0-11 x 2-3 mm) with tapering apices that are clad in mostly simple (sometimes septate) hairs; and by the 1.0-1.4 mm long seeds which are strongly transversely ridged.

FLOWERING

Throughout the year

FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

FRUITING

Throughout the year

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown and weedy. This species is usually present in gardens and it is often the dominant or sole oxalis present in lawns. It is unlikely that people would want to cultivate it.

ETYMOLOGY

oxalis: From the Greek word oxus meaning acid or sharp

exilis: Thin

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 November 2005. Description adapted from Webb et al. (1988).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Webb, C.J.; Sykes, W.R.; Garnock-Jones, P.J. 1988: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. IV. Naturalised Pteridophytes, Gymnosperms, Dicotyledons. Christchurch, New Zealand, Botany Division, D.S.I.R.

Wilcox, M.D. Creeping *Oxalis* carpets on Motuihe island. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal* 56: 19

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/oxalis-exilis/>